

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Office Action dated October 10, 2003 indicates that the claims should include some novel features of the invention to make them allowable. Additionally, during the Examiner Interview had on February 2, 2004, the Examiner indicated that Claim 24 was allowable as set forth in the Office Action submitted on August 18, 2003, for which indication the Applicants express their appreciation. It was also agreed during the Examiner Interview that the final status of the rejection made in the Office Action dated October 10, 2003 was premature and would be withdrawn. The Examiner is thanked for his time and consideration during the Examiner Interview.

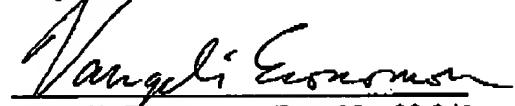
During the Examiner Interview of February 2, 2004, the Examiner indicated that the feature of the opaque layer, not disclosed or taught by any of the references, may be a feature that would render Claims 22 and 32 allowable, for which indication the Applicants express their further appreciation. By the above amendment, Claims 22 and 32 have been amended to recite the "opaque layer disposed over the waveguide and interposed between the surface of the material and the waveguide so as to minimize photosensitive alterations in the area of the waveguide," thereby rendering these claims, and all the claims dependent thereon, into condition for allowance. Support for this amendment is found at page 3, lines 6-10.

A minor amendment to Claim 28 was made to correct a typographical error noted in the consideration of the claims. No new matter is added by these amendments.

For the above reasons, it is considered that the claims, as amended, find support in the application specification as filed, and that the combination of elements recited in the pending claims, as amended, distinguish over the references of record. Accordingly, reconsideration and

withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested an indication of allowable subject matter is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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